DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 800 EA 023 299

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TITLE Report Cards for Education: Accountability Reporting in SREB States.
INSTITUTION Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Ga.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 30p.; Light type and low contrast will not reproduce adequately in paper copy.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, Southern Regional Education Board, 592 Tenth Street N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318-5790 ($7.50).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Criteria; Evaluation Utilization; *Outcomes of Education; Performance; Records (Forms); Report Cards; *School Effectiveness; *State Standards
IDENTIFIERS *Southern Regional Education Board

ABSTRACT

The application of the "report card" principle to educational accountability is described in this report, which summarizes 20 report cards now issued in the 15 states of the Southern Regional Education Board area. Specific state or local school data are not included. The following areas are summarized: mandates for reporting; the kind of information reported; methods for comparing districts and schools; formats for presenting information; and recipients of the report cards. Fourteen tables are included. (LMI)

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Report Cards for Education

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTING IN SREB STATES

Gale F. Gaines

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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SREB

Southern Regional Education Board

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BY THE YEAR 2000—

All states and localities will have schools with improved performance and productivity demonstrated by results.

Goals for Education
CHALLENGE 2000

The original "accountability mechanism" in public education is the simple, old-fashioned school report card, brought home by generations of American youngsters. Although today it is more likely to be a computer printout than a thick folded sheet filled in by hand, the school report card endures for a simple reason—it works. It keeps students mindful of their academic performance, and it lets parents and guardians know how students are doing. The report card serves as a frequent reminder to everyone of the importance of results, and it draws attention to the goals and standards of the school.

What has worked for generations of school children and their families is now working for educators themselves. Many states have begun to apply the "report card principle" to educational accountability at the state, district, and school levels. The principle is simple: Educators in schools, districts, and states will make performance a priority if measures of performance are included in report cards sent to policymakers, business leaders, and the general public.

The accountability "report card" is growing in popularity, and we can expect its use to increase as more states, business and citizen groups, and educational organizations recognize its usefulness. The Bush Administration's education plan, *America 2000—An Education Strategy*, calls for national and state report cards to report "to parents on how their children are doing." The Southern Regional Education Board already issues periodic "report cards" on progress toward 12 educational goals set for the region. This *Educational Benchmarks* series reports on results ranging from readiness for first grade to increasing numbers of high school graduates and adults with college degrees. Most states in the SREB region have adopted their own goals and are using report cards to keep track of their progress.

Behind all of these efforts is the understanding that information can shape public support for education—that parents and state leaders need to be kept up-to-date about what students know and can do. When schools report regularly and clearly on results, government, business, and community leaders are more willing to ease regulations and leave decisions in the hands of teachers and principals. Taxpayers also want a straightforward report card showing whether their major investment in public education is paying off. For schools to simply say "we're working as hard as we can" will no longer do. As a chief state school officer said recently, "This is a new way of doing business. Report cards show us where we are so we can develop a road map to improvement."

In many states, the school or district report card is one part of a larger accountability system that may also use student performance information for accreditation, for individual and school incentive awards, or for imposing sanctions on schools that do not do well. No two states follow quite the same report card approach—some look at statewide and district results, while others require school reports as well.

At whatever level they are used, report cards need to be easily understood by any interested citizen, and they need to convey an accurate message. They must measure and compare what is important. To insure public confidence, they need to offer comparable local, state, national, and even international measures on outcomes such as student achievement, dropouts, and high school graduation rates. They need to clearly convey how well students are being prepared to enter postsecondary education and the workplace. Most importantly, report cards must show whether gains are being made over time. Because schools are going to teach what is measured and reported, the report cards should not focus narrowly on a few outcomes; rather, they should contain a broad range of information that provides as complete a picture as possible.

By 1990, every SREB state had begun an initiative to develop education report cards. Reports in Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee have been available since the early to mid 1980s. Florida was the first state in the region to call for annual reporting through legislation passed in 19"6; South Carolina followed in 19"" with the Education Finance Act that required school and district improvement reports.

During the past several years, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia issued the first editions of their report cards. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who in the mid-80s chaired a committee to set state standards in Arkansas, said the Arkansas report card effort would be "a constantly evolving process" and said that the content and format of report cards would change as the needs of the state changed and as the ways of measuring student achievement and school outcomes improved.

We might think of these first report cards as today's "Model Ts" that will evolve into the better-engineered models of tomorrow. States can speed up the evolutionary process by taking advantage of the work on report cards that has already been done in the SREB states and in the nation. Some states have refined the reporting process more than others, and their reports might spark fresh thinking about ways to present meaningful data in an easily understood format.

This publication provides a summary of 20 "report cards" now issued in the 15 states of the SREB region. It does not examine specific state or local school data but looks instead at the kinds of data states report and the formats used to present the information. The following areas are summarized:

- Mandates for reporting
- What information is reported
- How districts and schools are compared
- How information is presented
- Who receives report cards

MANDATES FOR REPORT CARDS

Report cards have been initiated in various ways and, in several states, more than one type of report is produced. Ten SREB states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia) have passed legislation requiring report cards. The laws generally specify the types of information that the reports will include as a minimum and the level—statewide, district, or school—at which the information is to be provided. Some also direct the method by which the reports are to be distributed.

The State Department of Education or State Board of Education in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee have chosen to inform the public of the condition of the public schools in their states. Commissions appointed by the governors in Maryland and Virginia recommended that performance reporting be undertaken; the State Departments of Education are now issuing report cards. In addition to the requirements in law, State Departments of Education in South Carolina and Texas prepare an additional report—in South Carolina, a school performance report; in Texas, a statewide summary.

These reporting programs vary from state to state, however, they are generally intended to inform policymakers, educators, parents, and the general public of the educational performance and achievement of schools, systems, and their students. Their purpose is to provide a way to measure the results of the financial investment in the educational system as well as garner and maintain public support for improvement efforts.

West Virginia's 1988 education reform act states that report cards should provide "information to ...parents...and the general public on the quality of education...." The aim of the Arkansas School Report Card Act of 1989 is to "enhance the public's access to public school performance indicators and to better measure the dividends paid on the increased investment in schools." Oklahoma's 1989 legislature intended that "the public...be made aware of the relative accomplishments of the public schools and of progress being achieved."

State, District, and School-level Information Required by Law

Legislation in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia requires the reporting of state-level, district, and school performance information. In legislation passed in 1976, Florida became the first SREB state to require a report on the status of the state's education systems. The Florida reports were prepared annually by the Commissioner of Education, school districts, and individual schools. These reporting requirements were repealed in 1991 legislation that eases state regulation of local districts and calls for the development of a school-based accountability system under the guidance of the newly created Commission on Reform and Accountability. As a part of this new system, the Commissioner will report on the status of the state's educational system in the fall of 1992 and 1993. Beginning in the fall of 1994, individual school improvement reports will be issued on the results of student and school performance.

In Georgia, a 1988 amendment to the 1985 Quality Basic Education Act calls for the state school superintendent to report annually on student achievement and the State Board of Education to publish annual profiles of all public schools and local school systems. The law specifies what information is to be included at a minimum. Additionally, local districts must inform their citizens of the achievement of students collectively in each school and in the system.

The 1988 Children First Act in Louisiana called for the Department of Education to establish a system to collect and analyze data specified in the law. The Department is to produce progress profiles on each public school and local system and on the state as a whole. The first profiles covering the 1989-90 school year have been released. Because of requirements of the School Incentive Program to be implemented during 1991-92, schools are grouped by considering the grades served, student membership, and the number of students receiving free or reduced price lunches.

Table 1
PERFORMANCE REPORTING PROGRAMS IN SREB STATES

	Recommended Or Required By	Year Adopted/ Recommended	Responsibility For Reporting	Level of Information Required/Provided
Alabama	State Board of Education	1988	State Department of Education	State, District, and School; Comparisons with peer states and the nation
Arkansas	Legislation	1989	State Department of Education	State and District; School, where feasible
Florida*	Legislation	1991	Commissioner of Education	Status of State's Educational System +
			Schools	State, Region, District, and School +
Georgia	Legislation	1988	State Board of Education	State and District; School +
			State School Superintendent	State
			Local Districts	District and School
Kentucky	Legislation	1984	Local Districts	State and District
Louisiana	Legislation	1988	State Department of Education	State, District, and School
Maryland	Governor's Commission	1989	State Department of Education	State and District; School +
Mississippi	State Department of Education	1982**	State Department of Education	State, District, and School
North Carolina	Legislation	1989	State Board of Education	State and District
Oklahoma	Legislation	1989	State Board of Education	State and District; School +

Oklahoma's 1989 Educational Challenge 2000 Act set forth goals for education and created the Educational Indicators program to implement a system for assessing district and school performance. The law includes a listing of the information that is to be reported at a minimum and in a format that facilitates comparisons. The first two reports released in 1989 and 1990 contained state and district information; future reports will include school-level data. In the most recent report, districts were grouped by comparing the percent of students who qualified for free and reduced price lunches, the percent of students from minority groups, and the percent of total general fund revenue from local sources.

According to South Carolina's 1984 Education Improvement Act (EIA), which amended reporting requirements established in 19"", schools and districts must prepare improvement reports that "focus on factors found by research to be effective in improving schools, such factors (as) prescribed by...the State Board of Education." Though similar, these reports are not identical and, therefore, may not be comparable between districts. EIA also requires the State Board of Edu-

Table 1 Continued

	Recommended Or Required By	Year Adopted/ Recommended	Responsibility For Reporting	Level of Information Required/Provided
South Carolina	Legislation	1984	State Board of Education (Annual EIA Assessment)	State; Some Regional and National
	State Department of Education	1984**	State Department of Education (Performance Reports)	State and School
	Legislation	1977	Local District (Improvement Reports)	District
			Schools (Improvement Reports)	School
Tennessee	State Department of Education	1984**	State Department of Education	State and District
Texas	State Department of Education	1989	State Department of Education	State and District
	Legislation	1984	Local Districts	District and School
Virginia	Governor's Commission	1986	State Department of Education	State and District; School+
West Virginia	Legislation	1988	State Department of Education	State, District, and School

*In Florida, 1991 legislation repealed 1976 law requiring state, district, and school annual reports and mandates the development of a new school-based accountability system. The Commissioner's reports are to be issued in 1992 and 1993; school reports will begin in 1994.

** Reports in Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee were initiated following legislation passed in the years indicated.

+Under development.

cation to do an annual assessment of the law. The Department of Education's Division of Public Accountability annually prepares a statewide summary report called *What is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* (referring to the penny sales tax that funds EIA). This report assesses progress resulting from both the EIA and 1989 Target 2000 reform legislation.

Legislation passed in Texas in 1984 requires districts to prepare annual performance reports. Both the law and the State Board of Education rule governing the reports identify the type of information that must be included at a minimum (the rule suggests optional data as well). The format is left to the discretion of the local district, but the report is to respond to the State Board of Education's Long Range Plan. The law also requires districts to report certain information at the school level.

West Virginia reform legislation passed in 1988 mandated school, district, and state report cards that are "uniform and comparable between schools within and among the various school districts." The law identifies the information to be

included in the reports. The State Board of Education provides the format for districts to use in preparing the local system and school reports. The first reports, released in 1990, were printed and distributed by the State Board.

Laws Requiring District and Statewide Information

Laws in Arkansas, Kentucky, and North Carolina mandate report cards containing district and statewide information. Arkansas and North Carolina require reporting to be done in a way that permits comparisons of districts with similar characteristics.

The Arkansas 1989 School Report Card Act created an office of accountability within the State Department of Education to publish, beginning in 1990, annual report cards assessing the performance of districts and schools, where feasible. The law identifies the minimum content requirements and indicates that each district's or school's performance will be measured against comparable districts and schools.

The School Improvement and Accountability Act of 1989 in North Carolina added the responsibility for issuing an annual report card for the state and for each local district to the powers and duties of the State Board of Education. The reports are to take into account performance progress over the prior year; comparisons with other states; and demographic, economic, and other factors that affect student performance. Information describing each school district's community is used to calculate the system's "index of advantagement," which is then used to illustrate expected student performance.

Kentucky's report focuses primarily on district performance, but contains state information as well. 1984 legislation called for local districts to prepare the annual performance reports; the same provision was included in the Education Reform Act of 1990. District and statewide accomplishments in a number of specified areas must be published in the local newspaper with the largest circulation by October 1 of each year. The newly created Office of Accountability, which is under the direction of the Legislative Research Commission, is responsible for verifying the accuracy of the performance reports.

State Agencies Initiate Report Cards

Several SREB states (Alabama, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) have initiated performance reports without a specific legislative requirement to do so. (Those in South Carolina and Texas are in addition to reports that are required by law.) Mississippi was the first SREB state to pass major education reform legislation in the 1980s. The Education Reform Act of 1982 created a state testing program to identify and remedy instructional weaknesses, thereby improving student achievement. The District and School Profile report was born out of the realization that information from this testing program should be available to the public. The State Department of Education prepares a profile on each district that includes school, district, state, and some national information. The first of these annual reports were released during 1987-88.

In 1988, the Alabama State Board of Education adopted 20 accountability resolutions. A key factor in the accountability package is the Annual Status Report on the Condition of Education, first produced in 1989. The State Department of Education prepares a report for each district that contains school, district, and state information as well as comparisons with "peer" states that are similar in tax capacity and average per capita income. Districts are grouped into one of eight "clusters" based on the socioeconomic conditions and the enrollment within the system, allowing comparisons between like districts.

Maryland's School Performance Program was created in 1989 at the recommendation of a governor's commission. The program's first report, issued in 1990 by the State Department of Education, contains both state-level information and district information for each of the 24 local school systems. The State Board of Education adopted "excellent" and "satisfactory" standards, or levels of proficiency, for all of the student performance indicators reported. Statewide and district performance information is compared to the adopted standards. For example, a passing rate of at least 90 percent on the Maryland Writing Test is considered satisfactory; 96 percent and above is excellent. While districts are not specifically grouped by socioeconomic or other factors, descriptive information on each district is provided so that comparisons can be made.

One of the earlier laws in the region that set specific goals for education was passed in Tennessee in 1984. The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 was patterned after the governor's Better Schools proposal. While no provision in the law requires formal performance reporting, the Department of Education has annually produced a district report card that contains state information as well. No statewide district-level report is produced; however, members of the State Board of Education receive a bound volume containing all the district reports. Additionally, an annual report containing summary information at the state level on student, teacher, and school performance is submitted to the governor and the General Assembly.

In 1986, the Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education in Virginia recommended that the state and local school districts keep a "score card" on educational standards, instruction, and student achievement. The first report of the Outcome Assessment Project, containing 50 indicators for each school district, was issued to the State Board of Education early in 1991.

In addition to those reports required by law, both South Carolina and Texas issue an additional report. The South Carolina Department of Education prepares School Performance Reports. The purpose of these reports is to provide comparative data on a set of performance indicators. Achievement test scores included in the reports are compared to other schools with similar characteristics.

The Texas Education Agency initiated a statewide report in 1989 that incorporates district-level performance and statistical information, some of which appears in the local district annual reports that are required by law. Summary-level information (districts are not identified) is provided for a number of groupings based on district size, type (on a scale from major urban to rural), property wealth, tax rate, and geographic region.

WHAT INFORMATION IS REPORTED

It is important to remember that in many cases these reports are fairly new and will undergo change. While laws and state policies express content and other requirements, reports now being issued have not in all cases met the full intent of the programs. For example, Georgia and Maryland issued first reports that contained state and district information only; school-level information will be included in the future. The baseline data in the Maryland report will be used for comparisons in future reports. Louisiana and West Virginia will include five years of historical information as it becomes available. Future reports in Virginia may include some school-level information and district comparison groupings. Florida's Commissioner of Education, districts, and schools had prepared annual reports since the late 1970s. The new accountability system will take several years to develop; the first school improvement reports will be released in 1994. Indicators that will be reported have not yet been determined.

There are many similarities in what states report, however, all states do not provide exactly the same information, nor is it presented in the same way. Report cards should reflect the individual goals, conditions, and needs within each state. Variations are to be expected because of the unique characteristics of each state. Yet, some comparable data need to be presented in a way that allows progress to be measured against the performance outcomes of other states, the nation, and even other nations.

Much of the information in the early editions of the report cards has been available for years in a variety of statistical reports that, in some cases, may have been accessible to the public. Often considered "input" measures, most of the information does not necessarily indicate quality, performance, or achievement. However, it defines the context in which districts and states operate—factors that are believed to affect the performance of students. As reports are updated and become

Table 2
TYPE OF INFORMATION REPORTED ON SELECTED INDICATORS—TEACHERS AND STAFF

State/Report	Teachers and Certified Staff	Salaries	Degrees Earned	Certification/ Certification Deficiencies	Teacher Performance
Alabama District Annual Status Reports	Number of certified personnel; number of teachers by program type (special education, vocational, and regular)		Percent of certified personnel paid for advanced degrees		
Arkansas Annual School District Report Card Summary		Average teacher salary; average beginning and top teacher salary	Percent of certified staff with master's degrees	Percent of certification deficiencies	
Florida New Reports Under Development					
Georgia System Profiles	Ratio of administrators and support persons to teachers; number of personnel by certification level	Average teacher, administrator, and support personnel salaries		Number and percent of personnel by level of certification	
istrict Annual erformance Reports	Percent of instructional staff and administrators by rank	Minimum and maximum instructional staff and administrator salaries by rank		Number of teachers teaching out-of-field; number of classes taught by teachers out-of-field	
Louisiana Detailed School Reports			Percent of teachers by degree level	Percent of classes taught by teachers who are certified, temporary (less than fully certified), and neither certified nor temporary	
Maryland State and School System Performance Program Report	Instructional staff, support staff, and instructional aides per 1000 students (student enrollment given)				
Mississippi District and School Profiles	Number of K-12 and special education teachers	Average elementary and secondary teacher salaries	Percent of teachers with advanced degrees	Number of emergency certificates; number of classes where teachers are teaching out-of-field	
North Carolina State Report Card	Number of students per teacher (student membership given)	Average local supplement for teachers	Percent of teachers with graduate degrees		

Table 2 Continued

State/Report	Teachers and Certified Staff	Salaries	Degrees Earned	Certification/ Certification Deficiencies	Teacher Performance
Oklahoma Results 1990	Number of classroom teachers	Average teacher salary	Percent of teachers with advanced degrees		
South Carolina School Performance Reports					
Tennessee District Report Cards		Average salary of all certified personnel			Percent of professionals on Career Ladder levels II and III
Texas District Profiles	Number and percent of administrators, support staff, teachers, and other staff; percent by race; percent of teachers by program type (such as regular, special education, and bilingual)	Average administrator and teacher salaries	Percent of teachers with advanced degrees	Percent of teachers with one or more permits to teach out-of-field or assume duties for which they are not certified	Average teacher appraisal scores; percent of teachers on Career Ladder levels 2 and 3
Virginia Outcome Accountability Project					
West Virginia County and School Data	Total number of teachers and administrators		Total number of teachers and administrators by degree level		

more comprehensive, more "quality" factors will be given. The information that states include in their report cards generally falls into five categories: district and community characteristics, students, finance, teachers and staff, and student performance and achievement.

District and Community Characteristics

The most common elements describing the district and community in which the schools operate are: the number of schools in the district, the grade levels served, enrollment, the household or per capita income of the residents, and class size. Other less common factors include information relating to substandard and overcrowded housing (North Carolina), two parent and female heads of households (North Carolina), family poverty (Mississippi and North Carolina), parent educational level (Mississippi and North Carolina), and the number of micro computers in use in school systems (Alabama and Florida).

Student Characteristics

To describe the students, reports generally detail the percent in special education classes, percent in Chapter 1 programs, and the number or percent receiving free or reduced price

lunches. Reports in at least five states (Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas) describe the racial and ethnic make-up of the student body.

Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas report on students' plans to attend college or other postsecondary school. Kentucky measures the high school graduates who actually went to college, other postsecondary training, or into the military during the three years preceding the report. In North Carolina future reports will indicate the percent of students entering University of North Carolina institutions.

Maryland and West Virginia describe student mobility through the number or percent of students moving in and moving out of the districts. Student attendance rates are found in the report cards of nine states. Most often a single rate is given for each district and for the state as a whole. Alabama includes the average number of days that students are absent. Maryland records an attendance rate for grades 1 through 6 and another for grades 7 through 12.

Finance

Financial information is found in most of the report cards. Nearly every SREB state provides expenditures per pupil. Reports in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia include instructional expenditures as well. West Virginia may be the only state that includes the percent of the state budget spent for education. South Carolina provides total expenditures for the EIA and Target 2000 reforms and the percent of funds spent for each program area, such as strengthening basic skills, increasing academic standards, and elevating the teaching profession.

Nine SREB states (Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia) include information relating to revenues for education. Alabama, Georgia, and Texas, for example, show the percent of revenue from federal, state, and local sources. Mississippi reports on local millage rates. Wealth per pupil is included in Georgia, Maryland, and Texas. Arkansas does not provide financial data, however, it does consider availability of local resources when clustering districts into similar groups.

Teachers and Other Staff

While the focus is on teachers, a few reports also provide information on administrators and other staff. The report cards commonly include information on: salaries, the degrees earned by teachers, and certification. Nearly all SREB states indicate average teacher salaries. Arkansas goes a step further in identifying the beginning salary in each district as well as the top salary paid. Georgia and Texas also provide information on the salaries of administrators. Additionally, Georgia gives an average for "support" staff.

Eight states report on the level of the degrees held by teachers. For example, Mississippi and Texas show the percent of teachers with advanced degrees. West Virginia shows, by district, the number of teachers at each degree level. The average years of experience in teaching appears in the reports of six states.

Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina (in its state report), and Texas record certification deficiencies or out-of-field permits. Kentucky, for example, notes the number of teachers who are teaching out-of-field as well as the number of classes being taught by out-of-field teachers. For each school in Louisiana, the percent of classes taught by fully certified teachers, teachers with temporary certification, and those not certified are provided.

A variety of other items are reported by a few states on teachers and staff. South Carolina records a teacher attendance rate. In Alabama, the average number of days that teachers are absent is provided. Kentucky outlines percent attendance, average days of sick leave, and average days of personal leave for teachers, administrators, and other professional staff.

Much of the information reported for teachers other than the percent of teachers with certification (which may or may not be seen as a proxy for quality) would be considered "input indicators" that have been reported for years in state statistical profiles. Performance or quality measures are reported in only a few states. Only Texas records teacher appraisal test scores; average scores are provided for each district. Three states include information about career ladder or teacher incentive programs, which require teachers to meet certain expectations. Tennessee

TENNESSEE
Figure 1

	Grade Level	1987–88	1988–89	1989–90	State Average
Professional Educator Information					
% Professionals on Career Ladder Levels II and III	K–12	11.7	13.5	15.1	16.2
Average Professional Salary	K–12	$29,179.31	$31,295.01	$32,854.99	$28,203.26

and Texas report the percent of teachers on the various levels of the career ladders. South Carolina provides the percent of teachers earning awards through the Teacher Incentive Program in its statewide report (Figure 1).

Student Performance and Achievement

Because report cards are intended to inform a variety of agencies and the public on how well students are being educated, it is in this area that the true "outcome" measures will appear. Items commonly included in the reports include standardized test scores; Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing Program (ACT) scores; participation in and test scores from the College Board's Advanced Placement Program; and dropout, graduation, and promotion rates.

All of the SREB states provide data on standardized test scores—nationally normed tests, state-developed tests, or a combination of the two. Most report the scores, or the percent of students passing, by their grade level and the examination's subject area.

In Louisiana, Maryland, and South Carolina test scores are compared to a state standard that has been set. In Maryland, for example, a district's average score on the Functional Reading Test would be rated "satisfactory" if 80 percent of the students passed and "outstanding" if 90 percent or more passed. North Carolina has identified accreditation standards that include performance on standardized testing. Future reports will note if a district has or has not met the standard. In Florida, performance standards are under development.

Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia also furnish information on the percent of students meeting a certain percentile score based on national or state norms. For example, Louisiana reports the percent of students scoring in each national quartile on the California Achievement Test. Arkansas reports on the percent of students scoring in the bottom quarter on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. South Carolina's School Performance Reports show the percent of students scoring in the upper half and in the bottom quarter on two tests. Virginia reports the percent of students who score in the lowest quarter, in the middle two quarters, and in the top quarter statewide. Alabama shows the percent of students scoring "high" and "low" on the Stanford Achievement Test, when compared to the scores of similar students on the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing Program (ACT) scores and the percent of students taking the tests are often reported. Mississippi divides its scores by race; Louisiana, by gender as well. West Virginia reports ACT scores by the high school curriculum (business-commercial, college preparatory, general, and vocational-occupational) completed by the students taking the test. In Virginia, the percent of students achieving a score of 1,100 or above on the SAT is documented. The gain in SAT scores since the enactment of the Education Improvement Act in 1984 is what South Carolina's state report provides. The gain or decline in scores by race is also indicated.

Alabama notes the number of students taking examinations through the College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) as well as the number scoring between three and five on the exams (scores of 3 and above are generally accepted for college credit). North Carolina's AP information includes the number of students and schools participating as well as the number of examinations taken. West Virginia reports the number of students taking examinations by subject area. Virginia includes the percent of 11th and

Table 3
TYPE OF INFORMATION REPORTED ON SELECTED INDICATORS—STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

State/Report	State Testing Program Results	Nationally Normed Test Results*	SAT and ACT Scores	Advanced Placement Program Participation	Dropout Rates
Alabama District Annual Status Reports	Percent of students answering 75% or more of the items correctly by sub-test for grades 3, 6, and 9; percent of students passing graduation examination on first attempt	Percent of students in grades 4 and 8 scoring high and low when compared to similar students' scores on an ability test	Number of students tested and composite scores on ACT	Number of students enrolled; number taking examination; number scoring 3 through 5 on the examination	
Arkansas Annual School District Report Card Summary	Percent of students passing 8th grade test	Percent of students scoring below the 25th percentile in grades 4, 7, and 10 combined			Percent of students in grades 7 through 12
Florida	New Reports Under Development				
Georgia System Profiles	Scores by sub-test for grades 1, 3, 6, and 8; percent of students passing in grades 3 and 10 by sub-test	Scores and national percentiles for grades 2, 4, 7, and 9			
Kentucky District Annual Performance Reports		Number and percent of students taking the tests and scores by sub-test for grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10	Number and percent of high school graduates taking the SAT or ACT; scores by sub-test and composite scores		Number and percent of students *by grade* for grades 7 through 12
Louisiana Detailed School Reports	Number of students tested, scores, and percent of students meeting state performance standard by sub-test for grades 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11	Percent of students scoring in each national quarter by sub-test for grades 4, 6, and 9	Percent of graduating seniors taking the ACT; sub-test scores by gender; composite scores by gender and race/ethnicity		Percent of students *by grade* for grades 7 through 12 (supplemental report)
Maryland State and School System Performance Program Report	Number of students tested; percent passing; comparison to state-adopted standards				Percent of students in grades 9 through 12; comparison to state-adopted standard
Mississippi District and School Profile	Scores by sub-test and composite scores by race for grades 3, 5, 8, and 11; percent of students failing at least one section of the 11th grade literacy test by race	Scores by race for grades 4, 6, and 8	ACT scores by sub-test; composite scores by race		Percent of students in grades 9 through 12

Table 3 Continued

State/Report	State Testing Program Results	Nationally Normed Test Results*	SAT and ACT Scores	Advanced Placement Program Participation	Dropout Rates
North Carolina State Report Card	Percentile scores by sub-test for grades 3, 6, and 8; scores for English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, U.S. History, Algebra, and Geometry	Percentile scores by sub-test for grades 3, 6, and 8	Composite SAT scores	Number of schools, students, and examinations taken	Percent of students in grades 7 through 12 (in future reports)
Oklahoma Results 1990		Number of students tested; percentile scores for grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11; writing scores for grades 7 and 10			Percent of students in grades 9 through 12
South Carolina School Performance Report	Number of students tested, percent meeting state-adopted standard, and percentile rank (state and similar school) by sub-test for grades 6 and 8	Number of students tested, scores, percent above the 50th percentile, percent at or below the 25th percentile, and percentile rank (state and similar school) by sub-test for grade 7			Percent of students in grades 7 and 8, and 9 through 12; state percentile rank; median rates for all schools by quartile
Tennessee District Report Cards	Scores by sub-test for each grade in grades 2 through 8 and 10; grade 9 scores reported with and without special education students				
Texas District Profiles	Percent of students passing for grades 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and all grades				
Virginia Outcome Accoutability Project	Percent of students in grades 4, 8, and 11 scoring above the 50th and 75th percentiles; percent of students in grade 6 passing all 3 literacy tests on first try		Percent of students taking SAT; percent scoring over 1,100	Percent of students enrolled; percent scoring 3 through 5 on examination	Percent of total students and minority students in grades 7 through 12 and in grades 9 through 12
West Virginia County and School Data	Percentile scores by sub-test for grades 3, 6, 9, and 11		Percent of high school graduates taking the SAT or ACT	Number of students taking AP tests	Percent of students in grades 7 through 12

*Different nationally normed tests are in use.

12th grade students who took AP courses and the percent who scored three or more on at least one examination.

Most SREB states include dropout, graduation, or promotion rates, or a combination of these, in their report cards. Dropout rates are most often reported as a single annual rate at the state level and one for each school district. Louisiana provides an annual dropout rate by grade level for grades 7 through 12. Maryland's report compares the state and district annual dropout rates for grades 9 through 12 to a "satisfactory" and an "outstanding" standard (3 percent and 1.25 percent, respectively) as set by the State Board of Education. Both states are participating in a national pilot program to develop dropout statistics that are comparable from state to state. The dropout rate for minorities as well as for the general student population is given in Virginia.

South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia report on student graduation rates. Tennessee designates the percent of diplomas issued by type (regular, honors, special education, and certificate of attendance) and the percent of students not receiving a diploma (Figure 2). West Virginia reports the percent of students completing high school, the percent receiving a diploma, and the number of General Educational Development (GED) Certificates issued. Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia indicate the percent or number of advanced diplomas that are issued to students who have completed a rigorous course of study.

Student promotion and retention rates are reported in five states (Kentucky, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia). Kentucky and South Carolina provide the percent of students retained by grade—Kentucky reports for grades K-12; South Carolina for grades 1 through 8. South Carolina also documents promotion rates by grade and students who are promoted but do not meet state testing requirements. Virginia notes the percent of over-age students in grades four and eight.

TENNESSEE
Figure 2

		Grade Level	1987–88	1988–89	1989–90	State Average
Professional Educator Information						
% Professionals on Career Ladder Levels II and III		K–12	11.7	13.5	15.1	16.2
Average Professional Salary		K–12	$29,179.31	$31,295.01	$32,854.99	$28,203.26
Student Information						
% Diplomas Granted	Regular	12	74.6	72.5	72.0	79.1
	Honors	12	16.0	17.9	18.4	11.0
	Special Education	12	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.0
	Certificate of Attendance	12	1.4	1.7	1.0	0.8
	Seniors not Receiving Diploma in Spring Graduation	12	5.7	5.3	6.2	7.1
% Students in Vocational Education Courses		7–12	51.5	45.4	46.2	46.1
% Students in Special Education		K–12	10.2	10.7	11.4	14.8
% Chapter 1 Students		K–12	11.8	11.6	11.5	11.9

HOW DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS ARE COMPARED

All of the report cards make comparisons of one type or another—districts or schools are often compared with statewide, and in some cases national, averages. More than half of the SREB states group or cluster districts, and in some cases schools, with similar characteristics for the comparisons. Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia do not currently group their schools or districts into similar categories. Diversity within the state is one reason given for not making such comparisons. On the other hand, diversity among schools and districts is why comparison groups are created in many states.

Eight SREB states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas) classify districts or schools in a way that permits comparisons. Groupings are made by considering factors within the state that have a bearing on measurable student outcomes. For example, the Oklahoma Department of Education, after conducting studies to determine which had the greatest effect on test scores, identified three factors to use in grouping districts.

The most common characteristics used by states to cluster districts or schools are the size of the system and eligibility or participation in the free and reduced price lunch program. Some of the more unique factors include the percent of students absent for more than 14 days (North Carolina), percent of minority enrollment (North Carolina and Oklahoma), and the years

Table 4
FACTORS USED TO COMPARE DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

	Size/ Type of Community	District Size	Free and Reduced Price Lunches	Parent Education Level	Minority Enrollment	Family Financial Resources	Local Financial Resources	Other Factors
Alabama Districts		X	X			X	X	Peer states are identified by similar tax capacity and average per capita income
Arkansas Districts		X	X	X		X	X	
Georgia Districts		X	X					
Louisiana Schools	X	X	X					Grade levels taught
North Carolina Districts			X	X	X			Local expenditures per student; student absences; students in compensatory education
Oklahoma Districts			X		X		X	
South Carolina Schools			X					Student readiness to begin school; teachers' years of education beyond bachelor's degree
Texas Districts	X	X				X	X	Geographic region within the state

of education that teachers have beyond the bachelor's degree and student readiness to begin school (South Carolina).

In Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and South Carolina the identified factors are used collectively to place a district or school into a comparison group. The reports in Alabama, Georgia, and Oklahoma provide information for each district, their comparison group, and state averages. Alabama and Georgia divide their districts into eight similar groups. Oklahoma's nearly 600 districts are assigned to one of four groups. The reports contain a listing of the districts in each comparison category.

Louisiana has divided its 600 schools into 48 groups based on the grade levels taught, student membership, the size and type of the community, and students receiving free and reduced price lunches. Each detailed school report includes a listing of the other schools within the same category. Performance data for the school are presented with those of similar schools, the district, and state. South Carolina has categorized its schools into five groups to compare achievement test scores in its School Performance Reports. State information is available as well.

North Carolina uses a slightly different method to make comparisons. Each district is assigned an "index of advantagement" that currently ranges from -31 to +21 based on six factors that affect student performance. A district with a positive index number is considered above the state average in terms of the advantages available; a negative number indicates that the district is below the state average. While there is not a listing that groups districts with similar indexes, achievement by subject area is illustrated so that each district can see how it compares to the state average on test scores and to where its score is expected to be when "advantagement" is taken into account.

Arkansas and Texas are unique in that districts are matched on each comparison factor individually rather than by being placed in a single group based on all factors together. In Arkansas, comparison groups are created for five factors: district size, local resource wealth, income level, education level of the adults, and percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches. The state's 326 districts are ranked in each of these categories. For each factor, every district is placed in a comparison group that includes the 25 districts ranked immediately above and the 25 immediately below it. Each district's score on performance indicators, such as dropout rate and passing rates on standardized tests, is reported. The average score for each of the five comparison groups is also reported.

Similarly, in the Texas state summary report groupings are created within the categories of average daily attendance, district type (ranging from major urban to rural), property wealth, tax rates, and geographic region. Summary information is provided for each group within the five categories; districts within the groupings are not specifically identified. The state also provides comparative statistics for groups of districts with similar characteristics that are used in the district annual performance reports.

Virginia's reports do not currently group its school divisions into similar categories, however, a socioeconomic profile is prepared for each district that is compared to the profiles of all other districts in the state. The factors used to determine a district's socioeconomic status include the percent of college graduates in the community, personal income, percent of first graders in the lowest quartile of test scores, percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunches, and local tax base. The comparison shows the percent of a district's factors that fall in the bottom quarter statewide, in the middle half, and in the top quarter. Peer groupings may be available in future reports.

HOW INFORMATION IS PRESENTED

A key to the idea of informing parents and the public on the performance of schools and school systems is to report the information in a manner that is easily understood. West Virginia's law calls for "brief, concise reporting in nontechnical language." The Arkansas report is to be published so that it can be "easily understood by parents and other members of the community who are not educators." Louisiana legislation called for "a format common to (schools and school systems) which shall...provide...pertinent information in a clear and understandable form."

In those states where districts and schools themselves are required to produce report cards, the reports often vary in format and in what is reported within the minimum requirements. In Texas, for example, districts must describe their educational programs as they address the State Board of Education's long-range goals. Examples of topics that could be discussed for each goal are given; however, the format and content of this section is left to the discretion of the district. In another section of the report, districts are to report achievement information on the test(s) that they have chosen to give—not all districts use the same battery of tests. South Carolina's local reports focus on the school and district improvement plans. While some information within the reports may be comparable (the results of state-mandated tests), the main focus is on the individual school or district plan and how successfully the objectives within the plan are being met.

All SREB states are now doing some type of performance reporting. In Florida's case, new reports are being developed. In five states (Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia) more than one type of report is prepared. For example, West Virginia does individual school and district reports, a report that contains profiles of all districts, and an educational trends report containing information for the prior five years. Arkansas prepares a statewide report that presents information on all districts. Individual district reports are also issued. In South Carolina, schools and districts prepare improvement reports. The State Department of Education also produces a statewide summary report as well as school performance reports.

Information in the reports is generally presented in one of three ways:

1) Profiles, where a few pages are dedicated to providing all of the information on a given district or school;

2) By performance indicator, where measures from all of the districts or schools on a single indicator appear together; and

3) In a tabular format, where information from a number of districts on several indicators is given on each page.

Within these formats, tables are most often used to portray the reported information, though narrative explanations and graphic illustrations are used as well.

Reports Creating Profiles

Profiles are the most common design used for report cards. Statewide reports in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and West Virginia use this format to provide state and district-level information. District profiles in West Virginia also contain school-level information. The district profiles in Georgia, North Carolina, and Oklahoma contain system and state averages and allow for comparisons with similar districts or with expected outcomes. While some of the information reported is similar, the methods used for portraying it vary considerably. Georgia, for example, lists "profile data elements" in one column. Values for each item are provided in the three columns that follow; the first for the system average, the second for the comparison group, and the third for the statewide average (Figure 3). Oklahoma uses pie charts and bar graphs for the most part to illustrate its information (Figure 4).

North Carolina uses a combination of a tabular format to give information on a school system's characteristics and student achievement; bar graphs to illustrate community characteristics and student performance; and shaded "bands" representing the range of student achievement in the state on which the individual district's position is designated. The "bands" also show the state average range (where 54 percent of the districts scored) and the range where scores would be

GEORGIA
Figure 3

1989 GEORGIA SYSTEM PROFILE
602 ATKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS
October 1990

Criterion-Referenced Test Results	YOUR SYSTEM	COMPARISON GROUP	STATE AVERAGE
Average Grade 1 Reading Standard Score:	213	209	215
Average Grade 1 Math Standard Score:	213	211	216
Average Grade 3 Reading Standard Score:	215	209	214
Average Grade 3 Math Standard Score:	212	206	211
Average Grade 6 Reading Standard Score:	206	202	207
Average Grade 6 Math Standard Score:	200	202	205
Average Grade 6 Writing Standard Score:	194	192	198
Average Grade 8 Reading Standard Score:	212	206	209
Average Grade 8 Math Standard Score:	211	210	213
Average Grade 8 Writing Standard Score:	201	190	196
Average BST Reading Standard Score:	327	324	328
Average BST Math Standard Score:	324	321	324
Average BST Writing Standard Score:	343	337	342
Percent Passing Grade 3 Reading Test:	% 99	% 94	% 95
Percent Passing Grade 3 Math Test:	% 95	% 90	% 93
Percent Passing BST Reading Test:	% 92	% 86	% 89
Percent Passing BST Math Test:	% 93	% 83	% 85
Percent Passing BST Writing Test:	% 93	% 87	% 91
Norm-Referenced Test Results			
Average Grade 2 Standard Score:	99	94	98
Average Grade 2 National Percentile:	% 71	% 54	% 66
Average Grade 4 Standard Score:	118	115	120
Average Grade 4 National Percentile:	% 50	% 43	% 55
Average Grade 7 Standard Score:	150	148	154
Average Grade 7 National Percentile:	% 44	% 42	% 51
Average Grade 9 Standard Score:	171	167	174
Average Grade 9 National Percentile:	% 47	% 42	% 52

OKLAHOMA
Figure 4

Norman
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Cleveland County

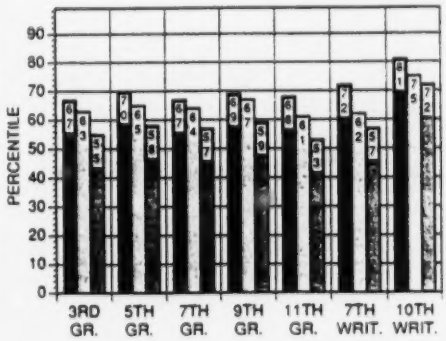
Enrollment	11060
Number of sites	23
Highest grade served	12
Classroom teachers	630

The following graphs and charts contain the 1990 results on a variety of topics which relate to education.

Achievement: Results are from the Oklahoma School Testing Program. The program tests students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 using a nationally normed standardized achievement test. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) were selected for use in grades 3, 5, and 7. The Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) were used for grades 9 and 11. A nationally normed writing test was given to students in grades 7 and 10. The Metropolitan Achievement Test - 6th Edition (MAT-6) was selected for the writing test.

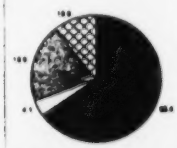
Results 1990
For individual school districts
The Oklahoma Indicators Report

Achievement results, 1990

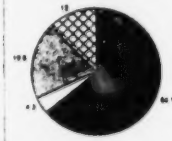


Expenditures, 1989

District



Similar district



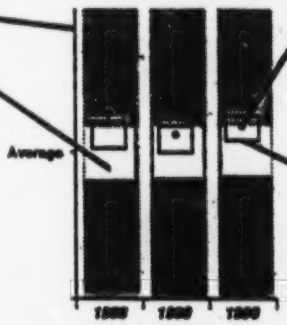
State

NORTH CAROLINA
Figure 5

Achievement by Subject Area

School system test scores are summarized into four curriculum areas -- mathematics, reading/language, science, social studies -- and a single overall achievement score for all tests in all curriculum areas.

- An achievement scale permits comparisons of individual school systems with all other systems in the state. The clear band represent the "average" range for all systems.



- Actual scores for school systems are represented by e. The position of the dot reflects system performance as average, above or below average compared to the state as a whole.
- The box represents the average achievement for the school system after taking into account the system's advantagement level. The position of the e in relation to the box indicates whether the system is achieving average, above average, or below average level, when compared to school systems with similar advantagement levels.

1990 Overall Achievement

"Par" represents average achievement for the school system after taking advantagement into account. The position of the e reflects overall achievement of this school system for all curriculum areas combined.

MARYLAND
Figure 6

MARYLAND

Maryland, with a population of 4,700,000, ranks forty-second in size and nineteenth in population among the fifty states. The State Department of Education is housed in Baltimore. There are twenty-four local school systems and 1,222 public schools.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

*** BASELINE DATA—SCHOOL YEAR 1989-90**

Assessed Knowledge

Md. Functional Tests (First Administration)	Standard % Excellence	Standard % Satisfactory	Number Taking	Percent Passing	Excellence	Satisfactory	Standard Met Yes/No
Reading (Grade 9)	97	95	46,139	93.4			✓
Mathematics (Grade 9)	90	80	47,899	87.9			✓
Writing (Grade 9)	96	90	47,239	88.4			✓
Citizenship (Grade 9/10)	92	85	38,435	75.0			✓

Student Participation

Attendance (Yearly)	Standard % Excellence	Standard % Satisfactory	Percent	Excellence	Satisfactory	Standard Met Yes/No
Grades 1-6	96	94	94.2		✓	
Grades 7-12	96	94	93.1			✓

Dropout Rate (Yearly)	Standard % Excellence	Standard % Satisfactory	Percent	Excellence	Satisfactory	Standard Met Yes/No
Grades 9-12	1.25	3.0	6.5			✓

Student Attainment

Promotion Rate (Yearly)	Standard % Excellence	Standard % Satisfactory	Percent	Excellence	Satisfactory	Standard Met Yes/No
Grades 1-8	99	96	97.5		✓	

School Improvement Highlights

A review of the information contained in the School Performance Report emphasizes diversity among our 24 school systems. For example, the largest system has 43 times the number of students and 22 times the number of schools of the smallest system. Though the systems have different areas of strength and weakness, all have directed their efforts toward improving educational opportunities for their students. These efforts should dramatically improve the quality of education available to Maryland's students. We expect that demonstrable increases in student performance will emerge over the next few years.

*In future years, this baseline data will be used to chart progress toward and beyond the standards. Additional areas will be added in 1991 and 1992.

expected to fall if the socioeconomic conditions in all of the state's districts were similar to those of the school system being profiled (Figure 5).

West Virginia uses pie charts to illustrate the breakdown within instructional and non-instructional expenditures for both the state and each district. The district profiles provide information for each school, the district, and the state in a tabular form for each of the indicators reported. Maryland does a two-page profile for the state and each district. Student performance is reported in tables that list the state-adopted "outstanding" and "satisfactory" standard for each item, the district's actual score, and columns where checks appear if the district has met the "excellent" level, the "satisfactory" level, or if the standard has not yet been met (Figure 6).

State reports in Louisiana and South Carolina provide state summary information—individual districts are not identified. Reports issued by Florida's Commissioner of Education since the late 1970s also provided state summary information. New legislation requires the Commissioner to issue a status report on the condition of the

ALABAMA
Figure 7

SAMPLE SCHOOL SYSTEM - NN

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1989-90) - PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	BASE YEAR	CHANGE* FROM BASE '?'	CHANGE* FROM PRIOR YR
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS ANSWERING CORRECTLY 75% OR MORE OF THE ITEMS ON THE ALABAMA BASIC COMPETENCY TESTS (REVISED).			
READING - GRADE 09	77.4%		
MATHEMATICS - GRADE 09	35.0%		
LANGUAGE - GRADE 09	58.2%		

* INDICATES FORMAT OF REPORT IN FUTURE YEARS

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1989-90) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SAMPLE SCHOOL #01

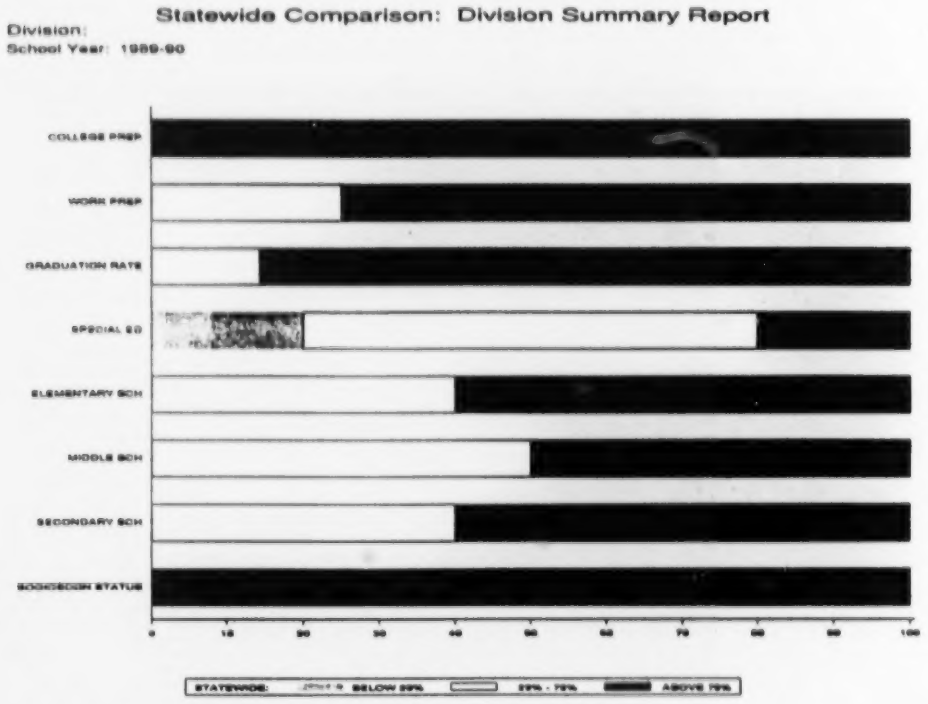
BASIC COMPETENCY TEST	SCHOOL	SYSTEM	CLUSTER	STATE
PERCENT STUDENTS ANSWERING 75% OR MORE OF ITEMS CORRECTLY.....GRADE 03				
READING	92.1	89.6	91.6	88.7
MATHEMATICS	92.6	92.1	91.6	88.5
LANGUAGE	93.6	92.8	91.3	87.3
PERCENT STUDENTS ANSWERING 75% OR MORE OF ITEMS CORRECTLY.....GRADE 06				
READING	97.3	95.3	94.6	91.8
MATHEMATICS	97.6	80.2	74.3	64.5
LANGUAGE	98.5	93.7	92.5	89.8
PERCENT STUDENTS ANSWERING 75% OR MORE OF ITEMS CORRECTLY.....GRADE 09				
READING	82.3	77.4	83.8	78.4
MATHEMATICS	48.1	35.0	58.0	50.3
LANGUAGE	87.1	58.2	85.1	58.8

state's educational system for two years beginning in 1992, until school report cards are available. The contents of that report are yet to be determined, but may include information on initial needs assessments that will be conducted by each school.

Profiles are also used to portray information on individual districts or schools. Separate district profiles are prepared in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Most do not contain information on individual schools. The bulk of the information in Tennessee's reports appears on one large sheet of paper in table form. System, personnel, and student information is given for the year being reported and the two prior years. Test scores are given by subject for the district and state. Scores for the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program are given by grade. Those from the Tennessee Proficiency Test are provided for all students and for students not in special education programs.

Each of Alabama's annual status reports creates a district and individual school profiles. The two-page district profile is divided into four parts: system information, revenues, expenditures, and performance measures. Data items are listed under the system, revenue, and expenditure categories on the first page; values are provided for each item in the system column and in columns for the "cluster" (the group of similar districts) and state, where appropriate. The performance indicators are listed on page 2 and base year measures are provided for each. In future years, two additional columns of measures will be available to allow the district to compare performance: the change between the base year and the year being reported and the change from the prior year. "Cluster" information is not given for the performance measures at the district level. A two-page profile of each school follows in a similar format, though the school's student achievement measures appear with the system, "cluster," and state measures (Figure 7).

VIRGINIA
Figure 8



LOUISIANA
Figure 9

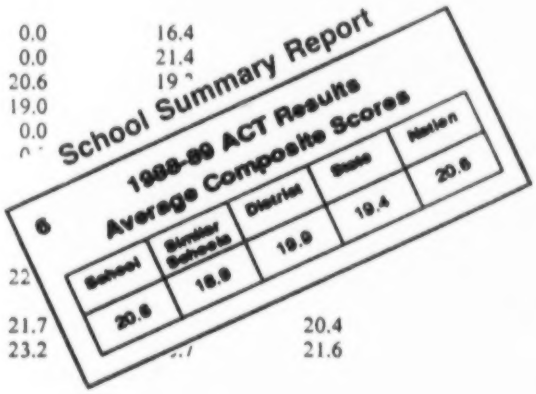
DETAILED SCHOOL-LEVEL PROGRESS PROFILE

School:
District:

Grades Taught: K-12, S
Similar Schools Category: 212

MEAN ACT SCORES

	SCHOOL 88-89	SIMILAR SCHOOLS 88-89	DISTRICT 88-89	STATE 88-89	NATION 88-89
MEAN COMPOSITE SCORES:					
ALL STUDENTS	20.6	18.9	19.9	19.4	20.6
GENDER:					
Male	21.1	19.2	20.5		
Female	20.0	18.6	19.4		
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Afro-American/Black	0.0	16.4			
American/Alaska Native	0.0	21.4			
Caucasian-American/White	20.6	19.2			
Mexican-American/Chicano	19.0				
Oriental/Pacific Islander	0.0				
Puerto Rican/Hispanic					
Other/Prefer No Response					
MEAN LANGUAGE ARTS SUB-TEST SCORES:					
ALL STUDENTS	22				
GENDER:					
Male	21.7		20.4		
Female	23.2		21.6		
MEAN MATHEMATICS SUB-TEST SCORES:					
ALL STUDENTS	17.9	17.9	18.7		
GENDER:					
Male	18.9	18.3	19.4		
Female	16.9	17.6	17.9		



Footnote:
- Mean scores computed by ACT for the state and nation include both public and nonpublic school students.

Virginia reports to districts on 50 outcome indicators that are grouped into seven categories, such as college preparation, graduation rate, and special education. Each district receives a profile that includes its measures on each of the 50 indicators and a table that shows where the state's lowest quarter, median, and upper quarter is on each indicator. Additionally, a bar graph illustrates the percent of the district's indicators in each of the seven categories that fall in the lowest quartile, within the middle half, and in the highest quartile (Figure 8).

Individual school reports are available in Louisiana, South Carolina, and West Virginia. Florida schools will begin reporting on their new school improvement plans in 1994 and will include performance on standards that will be adopted by the State Board of Education in September 1992. For every school, Louisiana prepares a detailed report as well as a two-page summary. The detailed report relates, for example, ACT scores for the school, similar schools, the district, state, and the nation by gender, race, and sub-test; the summary report gives the composite scores only (Figure 9).

SOUTH CAROLINA
Figure 10

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT - 1989-90

DISTRICT:
SCHOOL :

BLDS CODE:
GROUPING CATEGORY: THREE

BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TEST RESULTS FOR READING AND MATH - COMPARISONS WITH OTHER SOUTH

		1987-88				1988-89				1	
GRADE	SUBTEST	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	MEDIAN SCALE SCORE	STATE %TILE RANK	GROUP %TILE RANK	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	MEDIAN SCALE SCORE	STATE %TILE RANK	GROUP %TILE RANK	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	MEC SCA SCO
6	READING	215	781	83	:	259	786	81	91	302	793
	MATH	214	767	65	:	258	768	59	76	304	755
8	READING	198	794	98	:	234	774	96	95	230	791
	MATH	199	778	86	:	234	790	95	99	227	77

BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TEST RESULTS FOR WRITING - COMPARISONS WITH OTHER SOUTH CAROLINA SC

		1987-88				1988-89					
GRADE	SUBTEST	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT MEETING STANDARD	STATE %TILE RANK	GROUP %TILE RANK	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT MEETING STANDARD	STATE %TILE RANK	GROUP %TILE RANK	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PER MEE ST
6	WRITING	217	84.2	73	.	259	85.3	81	89	302	94.
8	WRITING	199	91.0	97	.	233	93.3	98	99	229	89

NOTES: MEDIAN SCALE SCORE = 50 PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL SCORED ABOVE AND 50 PERCENT BELO
PERCENT MEETING STANDARD = PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE WRITIN
STATE %TILE RANK = THE PERCENT OF SCHOOLS IN THE STATE SCORING BELOW YOUR SCHOOL FOR EACH S
GROUP %TILE RANK = THE PERCENT OF SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMPARISON GROUP SCORING BELOW YOUR SCHO
"." = NO SCHOOL DATA WERE AVAILABLE. BECAUSE OF REGROUPING DURING THE SUMMER OF 1989, GROU
REPORTED FOR 1987-88.

South Carolina's School Performance Reports include tables containing three years of scores on each test reported and the numbers of students taking the tests (Figure 10). West Virginia's school reports contain sections relating to students, personnel, and educational outcomes that appear on a single sheet of paper. Indicators are listed in each area and measures are given in column form for the school, county, and state.

Reports Organized by Indicator

Reports that are organized by performance indicator are prepared in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia. In Arkansas, comparison groups are created for each district consisting of the 25 districts ranked above it and the 25 ranked below it on each of five factors (district size, income level, educational level of the adults, local resource wealth, and percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches). Every district's average on the nine indicators currently reported (such as average teacher salaries and the percent of students passing the Minimum Performance Test) are compared to its five comparison groups (Figure 11). West Virginia's Educational Trends report lists the districts beneath each data item and provides five years of information, when available, for each district in table form (Figure 12).

Reports on individual districts in Louisiana and Mississippi provide measures for every school under each indicator. A district report in Mississippi, for example, includes information on its Basic Skills Assessment Program for grade 8, providing scores by subject for each school containing eighth grade, for the district, and for the state (Figure 13).

Tabular Reporting

Oklahoma and Texas, the two SREB states with the greatest number of school districts, provide information in a tabular form; districts are listed down the page and the various indicators form columns to the right. Oklahoma's Results 1990 report, containing the district profiles mentioned previously, also provides a tabular summary of all of the indicators for every district at the back of each of the report's four volumes. A selected page from the Texas Snapshot: 1988-89 School District Profiles shows information for 39 districts on 16 data items (Figure 14).

ARKANSAS
Figure 11

DROP-OUT RATE 1989
ARKANSAS AVERAGE 4.2

Lea	DISTRICT	DIST. AVG.	SIZE AVG.	INC. AVG.	EDUC. AVG.	RES. AVG.	LUNCH AVG.
67-01	DEQUEEN	5.1	3.8	3.0	3.1	3.7	3.4
67-03	HORATIO	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.6	3.5
67-04	LOCKESBURG	4.5	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.4
68-02	CAVE CITY	3.6	4.2	3.5	3.4	3.1	3.6
68-03	EVENING SHADE	.7	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.1	3.3
68-04	HIGHLAND	4.0	4.1	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.9
68-05	WILLIFORD	3.1	3.4	4.1	4.1	3.6	4.4
68-06	POUGHKEEPSIE	1.6	3.2	4.1	5.0	3.3	4.3
69-01	MOUNTAIN VIEW	6.0	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.8
69-02	STONE COUNTY	1.0	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.3
69-04	RURAL SPECIAL	6.9	3.3	3.7	5.0	3.1	4.3
70-01	EL DORADO	2.3	4.2	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.8
70-02	HUTTIG	5.2	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.6	

Dist. Avg. is the average measure for the district on the indicator being reported.

Comparison groups are created by ranking all districts on each of the five comparison factors that follow. The comparison group for a given district consists of the 25 districts ranked immediately above it and the 25 districts ranked immediately below it on each of the five factors.

Size Avg. - the size of the district based on average daily membership.

Income Avg. - the percent of families within the district having an income above the poverty level.

Educ. Avg. - the percentage of adults who have completed four or more years of college.

Res. Avg. - considers the wealth of the community and the number of students served by the district.

Lunch Avg. - the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches.

West Virginia Report Card 1989–90

Classrooms Granted Exemption to Teacher-Pupil Ratio (#)

WEST VIRGINIA
Figure 12

County	1985-86	1986-87	School Year 1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1989-90 RESA Average
Barbour	21.0	65.0	11.0	27.0	0.0	0.7
Berkeley	70.0	294.0	120.0	44.0	0.0	0.0
Boone	76.0	39.0	41.0	30.0	0.0	0.0
Braxton	8.0	31.0	15.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
Brooke	4.0	30.0	9.0	11.0	0.0	0.0
Cabell	88.0	96.0	70.0	49.0	0.0	0.0
Calhoun	5.0	14.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
Clay	50.0	8.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
Doddridge	9.0	10.0	7.0	3.0	0.0	0.7
Fayette	40.0	94.0	70.0	38.0	0.0	0.0
Gilmer	1.0	7.0	4.0	3.0	0.0	0.7
Grant	0.0	7.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Greenbrier	21.0	8.0	28.0	7.0	0.0	0.0
Hampshire	9.0	32.0	9.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
Hancock	18.0	8.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hardy	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Harrison	48.0	109.0	71.0	31.0	0.0	0.7
Jackson	5.0	18.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Jefferson	27.0	31.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kanawha	85.0	230.0	318.0	37.0	0.0	0.0
Lewis	0.0	23.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.7
Lincoln	23.0	32.0	25.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
Logan	41.0	56.0	48.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Marion	27.0	43.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Marshall	46.0	5.0	8.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
Mason	27.0	33.0	18.0	16.0	0.0	0.0
Mercer	83.0	110.0	32.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mineral	1.0	21.0	12.0	33.0	0.0	0.0
Mingo	29.0	29.0	28.0	21.0	0.0	0.0
Monongalia	120.0	53.0	20.0	14.0	0.0	0.7
Monroe	7.0	14.0	8.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Morgan	0.0	11.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
McDowell	98.0	153.0	110.0	122.0	0.0	0.0
Nicholas	16.0	13.0	8.0	7.0	0.0	0.0
Ohio	7.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pendleton	5.0	21.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pleasants	4.0	2.0	6.0	18.0	0.0	0.0
Pocahontas	5.0	1.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Preston	40.0	34.0	6.0	9.0	0.0	0.7
Putnam	29.0	33.0	17.0	35.0	0.0	0.0
Raleigh	51.0	129.0	82.0	55.0	0.0	0.0
Randolph	56.0	43.0	18.0	9.0	0.0	0.7

MISSISSIPPI
Figure 13

GULFPORT SCHOOL DIST

BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (1987-88 -- 1988-89)

GRADE 3

NAME	SCHOOL YEAR	READING	MATH	WRITTEN COMM.	COMPOSITE SCORE BLACK	COMPOSITE SCORE WHITE	COMPOSITE SCORE TOTAL
TWENTY EIGHTH STREET ELEMENTARY	88-89	371.5	367.2	367.4	368.7	367.4	369.0
XXXXXXXXXXXXX DISTRICT XXXXXXXXXXXX	87-88	377.9	373.7	370.7	369.7	378.5	374.6
	88-89	373.5	372.3	369.5	368.1	377.1	372.9
XXXXXXXXXXXXX STATE XXXXXXXXXXXXX	87-88	373.9	374.8	370.7	368.6	378.9	373.7
	88-89	373.3	378.1	372.7	370.7	381.3	375.9

TEXAS
Figure 14

DISTRICT DETAIL

COUNTY NUMBER, NAME, REGION DISTRICT NAME, COOP STATUS		TEACHERS										
		36. % WITH 5 OR FEWER YEARS EXPERIENCE	37. AVERAGE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	38. % WITH ADVANCED DEGREES	39. % ON CAREER LADDER LEVEL 2	40. % ON CAREER LADDER LEVEL 3	41. % REGULAR EDUCATION	42. % SPECIAL EDUCATION	43. % COMPENSATORY EDUCATION	44. % BILINGUAL EDUCATION	45. % VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	46. % OTHER EDUC. (INCLUDES GIFTED & TALENTED)
070 ELLIS	REGION 10											
ITALY	M	30	9.2	32	45	5	81	7	7	0	6	0
MIDLOTHIAN	F	29	10.2	31	39	6	82	8	5	1	3	1
MILFORD	M	81	6.5	13	6	0	84	6	1	0	9	0
PALMER	M	34	9.0	16	36	3	94	5	0	1	0	0
RED OAK	M	38	9.1	19	24	14	82	5	9	1	3	
WAXAHACHIE		32	10.5	30	49	15	72	10	6	1	8	
MAYPEARL	M	27	12.6	22	51	0	87	1	4	0	6	
071 EL PASO	REGION 19											
CLINT		42	8.6	13	34	18	67	7	3	19	1	
EL PASO		33	11.2	21	38	19	61	8	6	20	3	
FABENS	M	38	9.8	13	43	7	81	4	7	6	3	1
SAN ELIZARIO	M	60	6.6	15	26	4	58	5	5	28	2	2
YSLETA		32	10.2	22	31	34	64	7	9	11	2	8
ANTHONY	M	35	9.3	38	46	3	80	5	0	13	2	0
CANUTILLO		27	10.6	24	56	10	65	8	5	19	3	0
TORNILLO	M	51	9.8	13	29	15	87	4	4	1	0	4
SOCORRO		49	7.8	23	34	4	72	5	11	10	0	2
072 ERATH	REGION 11											
THREE WAY	M	100	1.3	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	
DUBLIN	M	32	10.0	43	49	0	78	8	5	1	5	
STEPHENVILLE	F	25	11.8	56	62	12	78	7	6	1	7	
BLUFF DALE	M	40	6.0	0	40	0	100	0	0	0	0	
HUCKABAY	M	45	8.2	49	24	8	82	6	0	1	6	
LINGLEVILLE	M	54	6.9	40	29	6	77	6	4	1	8	
MORGAN MILL	M	32	8.8	36	64	0	92	0	8	0	0	1
073 FALLS	REGION 12											
CHILTON	M	57	7.3	8	16	12	69	4	4	0	0	3
MARLIN	F	29	13.8	34	42	0	72	10	8	0	8	2
WESTPHALIA	M	38	8.3	5	57	19	99	0	0	0	0	2
ROSEBUD-LOTT	M	28	12.2	31	48	0	91	8	1	0	0	0
074 FANNIN	REGION 10											
BONHAM	F	20	12.4	42	53	5	80	11	4	0	5	1
DODD CITY	M	40	10.8	18	71	0	85	8	5	0	0	2
ECTOR	M	50	11.8	24	38	0	85	8	7	0	0	1
HONEY GROVE CONS	M	28	11.2	33	68	0	77	10	9	0	3	2
LEONARD	M	39	8.7	34	75	0	86	8	1	1	5	0
SAVOY	M	31	10.7	59	55	0	77	5	12	0	6	0
TRENTON	M	37	12.2	42	42	10	83	4	5	0	8	0
SAM RAYBURN	M	32	11.8	52	44	0	74	8	7	0	9	2
075 FAYETTE	REGION 13											
FLATONIA	M	27	10.1	18	21	3	88	6	3	0	5	0
LA GRANGE	M	22	13.7	23	50	9	80	7	6	1	5	2
SCHULENBURG	M	35	10.5	31	48	0	74	7	19	0	0	1
FAYETTEVILLE	M	43	12.6	44	37	6	82	6	1	0	10	
ROUND TOP-CARMINE	M	9	14.8	20	23	11	79	5	6	0	10	

WHO RECEIVES REPORT CARDS

As mentioned earlier, the intent of these report cards is to inform policymakers, educators, parents, and the general public of the condition of the educational systems that serve them. Most of the laws and policies governing the programs require reports to be completed annually by a specified date and distributed to state agencies, districts, and schools. Reports are available to the general public upon request.

Seven SREB states (Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, South Carolina, and West Virginia) either mandate that parents receive local system or school reports, or distribute the reports with no mandate. While Louisiana's law does not require distribution to parents, the State Department of Education sends local districts enough school summary profiles so they can be distributed to parents of every student.

Florida, South Carolina, and West Virginia require school reports to go to every parent or guardian whose children attend the school. Georgia law specifies that local school systems are to inform their citizens of student achievement, the cost of providing educational programs, and other items identified by the State Board of Education. School boards in Kentucky must publish their district reports in the local newspaper with the largest circulation by October 1 each year. Maryland's first report was provided to school systems; future issues will go to every parent.

In more than half of the SREB states, there is no requirement that reports be sent to the parents of students; report cards are available to parents upon request. Alabama districts are *encouraged* by the State Department of Education to provide reports to parents. In Tennessee, the State Department sends a supply of reports to districts, though not enough for every parent; each system decides on the distribution. There are no distribution requirements in North Carolina. Report cards are sent to districts and the media; copies are available upon request to anyone.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Report cards for educational systems—a new use for a very familiar tool—may become one of the most important documents prepared by schools and school systems. The initial reports available are just that—a beginning. In that regard, all report cards can be improved to reflect the new developments, such as better data on dropouts, improved ways to measure student achievement, or by including information that is not available now. They should be continually reviewed and refined to assure that they accurately portray the condition of education in states, school systems, and schools, providing a guide for determining how well students are learning. As states shift more decision-making responsibilities to local school districts, these reports will become even more critical in measuring progress toward educational goals and in maintaining the public support necessary to carry on reform efforts.

The continued development of educational report cards should include parents and the general public as well as governmental leaders and policymakers, business leaders, and educators. To assure a useful product that is responsive to changing conditions in states and communities, a number of questions should continue to be asked:

- What is the intent of the report card in our state? Is it fulfilling that need?
- Are we reporting the outcomes and results that are important?
- Do the reports show progress made by our schools, districts, and state over time?
- Are strengths and weaknesses in our educational systems clearly shown?
- Are the reports being used by policymakers and educators to improve the schools?
- Are the reports clear, understandable, and widely distributed?